

## Selling Products or Services to the City

### Selling Products or Services to the City of Eau Claire

The City of Eau Claire is committed to a purchasing system that provides quality, integrity and increased competition. It is the intent of the City to directly reduce the cost of government by making the most economical acquisition of quality goods and services that will assure efficient operation of City Government. This document will answer some of the most frequently asked questions about how the City of Eau Claire purchases supplies, equipment, services and construction. Any specific problems or questions should be asked or brought to the attention of the City Purchasing Manager.

### City Contacts:

Office hours are from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, excluding observed holidays. Vendors are encouraged to call and schedule an appointment with purchasing staff in advance. Please do not contact the individual departments.

#### Purchasing Department

City Hall

203 S. Farwell Street

P.O. Box 5148

Eau Claire, WI 54702-5148

PHONE: 715/839-4916

FAX: 715/839-4940

### Bidding Information

Please review procedures on how to access bid opportunities, bid tabulations, award information, plan holders' lists, etc. under Access to Bid Opportunities

### What does the City buy?

If your firm is interested in becoming a supplier for the City, this question should be asked when you contact purchasing department personnel. The City buys thousands of different products and services - most in small quantities, some in larger quantities.

Does the city have preferences for local products and services?

No, but...for very small quantities of products or services that are needed quickly, it is usually most expedient to get them locally. So many of our smaller and even some larger purchases, where the need is urgent, will quite naturally, be made locally. Competitive pricing is obtained if there is time and if it is felt by purchasing personnel that the effort will be worth the time under the circumstances.

## Purchase Methods

**Competitive Sealed Bids:** This method is used for construction, the cost of which is estimated to exceed \$25,000, and for all other products and services, the cost of which is estimated to exceed \$30,000. This is the preferred method of selection for larger purchases when the end product or result can be adequately defined and specified.

**Request for Proposal:** This method is used for products and services when the end product cannot be adequately defined or specified or where factors other than the product or service need to be considered.

**Small Purchase:** This method is used for all purchases the estimated cost of which is below the amounts stated for competitive sealed bids. The majority of purchase orders are issued under this method. However, only about 20% of the dollars are spent using this method. Written quotations, telephone quotations, catalog prices with discounts and other similar methods are also used to select vendors under this method.

**Sole Source:** This method is used when competition does not exist for the required product or service. This may be the case where a product is patented and no other product exists that offers equal performance.

**Purchasing Card:** The Purchasing Card is a tool for agency employees to make low-dollar purchases (typically under \$500) for official agency business needs.

**Emergency Procurement:** This method is used only when an emergency exists - where life or property is in eminent danger.

How can I enhance my chances of selling my products or services to the City?

Do your homework. Find out what price was last paid by the city for the type of product or service you wish to sell. It is a public record.

Read the IFB or RFP or RFQ carefully so that your submission is responsive.

Know your competition and their pricing policies.

Perform if you are awarded the contract. Follow up on delivery and make sure the end user is satisfied.

Make suggestions to City personnel about how your product/services might improve production etc.

What are the "rules of the road":

Wisconsin statutes govern City procurement of construction. We have to operate within the law. If you are selling construction services, be familiar with Wisconsin Statutes 62.15 and 66.293. All other procurement (products and services) is governed by the City Code of Ordinances, Chapter 2.92. Read it and you will learn a great deal about how we must do business.

What about gifts/gratuities?

It is very simple - we cannot accept them. We (any City employee and elected officials) cannot (by law) accept anything of any value. So do not offer any gifts or gratuities to any City employee or elected officials.

How quickly does the City pay invoices?

Payment will, in most cases, be made within two weeks after delivery. The City pays bills every Friday. Sometimes payment will take longer if there is a problem with the product or service. If it's taking too long please contact our Accounts Payable department (715-839-4917) and they will research and inform you about the situation.

What if I feel I have been treated unfairly or wrongly?

Call the City Purchasing Manager (715-839-4916) and discuss the matter. If you are unsatisfied with that discussion you have the right to file a formal protest. The procedure for filing a protest is described in Chapter 2.92.195 of the City Code of Ordinances. Do not contact elected representatives or the City Manager. They will refer you to the Purchasing Manager.

What if I must, in order to be responsive, submit confidential information to the city? Will it remain confidential?

Truly verifiable confidential information, such as trade secrets will be kept confidential if that request is made in writing and the specific information is clearly identified. However, you should be familiar with Wisconsin's Public Records law since it defines what is public record and what is not. Although there may be things you and the City would like to keep confidential at your request, we may be unable to do so under Wisconsin Law.